

**WASHINGTON** – The Committee on House Administration on Thursday held a hearing in Las Cruces, N.M., and field briefing in Phoenix, Ariz., to gain insight into the issues raised by voter identification requirements. Chairman Vernon J. Ehlers, R-Mich., presided over both proceedings, which were designed to gather information at the state level on the effectiveness of voter identification measures in helping to eliminate fraudulent voting by non-citizens and other ineligible persons.

The issue of voter identification was familiar to witnesses from both states – New Mexico has experienced a long and ongoing debate on ID requirements, and Arizona’s Proposition 200 stipulates that proof of citizenship is required to register to vote, and identification is required at the polls, in that state.

The Committee’s goal in holding both proceedings was to gain insight from the states’ experience. “We want to learn from you,” Ehlers said.

Testimony in both states illuminated their experiences in implementing effective voter identification requirements. Las Cruces Attorney Daniel A. Bryant said his experiences on behalf of the Otero County Clerk’s office and his work in Dona Ana County led him to believe that, “One of the most important goals that I can pursue is to ensure that all elections in the our country are held with the highest possible standards of honesty and integrity that guarantees that each United States citizen’s vote counts in every election.”

Bryant detailed numerous cases where fraud, misconduct and other problems jeopardized the integrity of elections, situations that may have been avoided with a comprehensive voter identification law. “As a result, I cannot reach any conclusion other than the need for an effective, consistent, nationwide voter ID requirement,” he said.

Individual cases of fraudulent non-citizen voting were not the only concern for witnesses and Members participating in Thursday’s hearing in New Mexico. “By and large, it is the

organizational efforts that I am concerned with,” said Ehlers after listening to former Albuquerque City Council Member Vickie Perea’s testimony on 527 organizations whose efforts have resulted in fraudulent voter registrations.

“The citizens of Arizona have realized that producing proof of citizenship and identification are not burdensome requirements, and doing this is a very small price to pay for protecting their right to vote,” said Maricopa County Attorney Andrew P. Thomas at the Phoenix hearing. “Law enforcement likewise should do its part to safeguard this important right. I applaud Congress for looking into these matters and taking seriously the duty of preserving our most basic birthright as Americans.”

In addition to Chairman Ehlers and fellow Committee on House Administration Member Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., Congressmen Trent Franks, R-Ariz., Raúl M. Grijalva, D-Ariz., J.D. Hayworth, R-Ariz., Ed Pastor, D-Ariz., and Steve Pearce, R-N.M., took part in at least one of the proceedings. Addressing the impact of voter identification requirements on his constituents, Congressman Hayworth said, “Every vote that is cast by a non-citizen effectively negates the vote of a lawful American citizen.”

“I am delighted with the testimony that we heard today,” said Chairman Ehlers, although he noted that more work is needed. “Our objective is to make sure that the citizen’s right to vote is secure, and at the same time, not allow people or organizations to dilute the voting system.”

## **Committee examines effectiveness of voter ID requirements**

Friday, 04 August 2006 00:00

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